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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5090
INFO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY COLLECTIVE
RUEHAR/AMEMBASSY ACCRA 3140
RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA 3252
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 1679
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 2513
RUEHDK/AMEMBASSY DAKAR 2882
RUEHKM/AMEMBASSY KAMPALA 3300
RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI 5748
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RUZEJAA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK
RHMFISS/EUCOM POLAD VAIHINGEN GE
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 2432
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 HARARE 000867

SIPDIS

AF/S FOR B. WALCH
DRL FOR N. WILETT
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU
ADDIS ABABA FOR ACSS
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR J. HARMON AND L. DOBBINS
STATE PASS TO NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR MICHELLE GAVIN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/30/2019
TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [ZI](#)
SUBJECT: A WEEK OF RAIDS, ARRESTS, AND MAYHEM IN ZIMBABWE

REF: HARARE 864

Classified By: CDA Katherine S. Dhanani for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

SUMMARY

¶1. (U) Throughout the past week, Zimbabwe's security forces and likely ZANU-PF supporters have executed a series of operations targeting the MDC and several local NGOs, resulting in the arrest of seven people -- five of whom were subsequently released -- the attempted abduction of an eighth individual, a raid on an MDC house, an attempted break-in at the home of an MDC minister, and the burning of 10,000 copies of an MDC newsletter. MDC officials believe the raids, arrests, and harassment are a backlash against the party's decision to disengage with ZANU-PF, and they warn of a renewed wave of violence.

¶2. (U) As the arrests were being carried out, the UN Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, who had been invited by the government on a fact-finding mission, was denied entry into Zimbabwe. END SUMMARY.

Timeline of a Crackdown

¶3. (U) Friday, October 23: A heavily-armed force of approximately 50 police officers raided a known MDC-T house in the Chisipite suburb of Harare. The officers presented a search warrant, claimed to be searching for an arms cache, and forced the caretaker to dig throughout the property's yard. The police failed to discover any arms and refused to leave the warrant, claiming that it had not yet been signed by a supervisor. Earlier in the week, reports circulated that 19 AK-47s and some other arms disappeared from an army barracks in Harare.

¶4. (U) Saturday, October 24: Two Bulawayo MDC-T parliamentarians were arrested at a roadblock in Bulawayo and detained overnight at Bulawayo Central Police Station. According to the MDC-T, the police alleged that the MPs)- Reggie Moyo and Albert Mhlanga)- were ferrying ammunition stolen from Pomona Barracks in Harare.

¶5. (U) Saturday, October 24: Local ZANU-PF officials seized and burnt over 10,000 copies of the recently-released "Changing Times" MDC newsletter in Bindura in Mashonaland Central province. Several MDC officials confirmed the incident and said that four employees of the ZANU-PF-led Bindura city council were responsible for their destruction.

¶6. (U) Sunday, October 25: National Association of NGOs (NANGO) Board Chairwoman Dadirai Chikwengo and Chief Executive Officer Cephas Zinhumwe were arrested at the A'Zimbabwe hotel in Victoria Falls for holding a political meeting without notifying the police. The arrests occurred immediately after the conclusion of NANGO's annual conference for NGO directors, which was attended by 120 NGO Directors and the Minister of Labor, Paurina Gwanyanya (MDC-T). The two were arrested after Minister Gwanyanya left the hotel and as NGO directors were boarding buses to return to Harare. On October 27, they were formally charged with contravening the Public Order and Security Act (POSA) and released on bail.

¶7. (U) Tuesday, October 27: Four armed men attempted to kidnap Edith Mashaire, an MDC-T security administrator, while she was walking through a Harare shopping mall on her way to

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work that morning. According to Mashaire, three of the men carried AK-47 rifles and the fourth held a pistol. The men attempted to wrestle her into a twin-cab Isuzu truck, but Mashaire escaped after screaming for help.

¶8. (U) Tuesday, October 27: MDC Transport Manager, Pascal Gwezere, was arrested by six armed men driving a grey Isuzu truck. The incident occurred at 6:45 p.m. after Gwezere arrived at his home in Harare. According to an MDC press release, the men returned the following day, confiscated the cell phone of his wife, and informed her that he was being held at Marimba Police Station.

¶9. (U) Wednesday, October 28: Ndodhana Ndhlovu and Thulani Ndhlovu of the Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN) were arrested in Dete, a small town in Matabeleland North, for conducting a public outreach workshop without police clearance. The workshop was attended by about 50 participants and local Chief Nelukoba. Ndodhana was subsequently released without charge, but Thulani was charged and remains in custody. The arrests led ZESN to cancel another workshop scheduled for October 29 in the same province.

¶10. (U) Wednesday, October 28: A group of men attempted to break into the home of Prime Minister Tsvangirai aide Gorden Moyo. Moyo, a Cabinet minister serving in the PM's office, said that they attempted to force their way into the house, broke some windows, and left after he threatened to shoot.

¶11. (C) Wednesday, October 28: The director of the Counseling Services Unit, an NGO that provides medical care for victims of torture and human rights abuses, told us that her office has been monitored almost continuously throughout the week by police Superintendent Peter Magwenzi. Magwenzi is well-known to civil society activists and has been involved in numerous political cases. Last year he was complicit in the abductions of Jestina Mukoko and other civil society activists.

Meanwhile, UN Envoy Denied Entry and Deported

¶12. (U) On October 28, the UN Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, Manfred Nowak, was denied entry into Zimbabwe at Harare International Airport (reftel). Nowak, who was scheduled to come to Zimbabwe on a fact-finding mission, was told on October 26 that the government was rescinding its invitation because it was preoccupied with the SADC Troika visit. Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai then invited him for a meeting on October ¶29. When Nowak arrived at the airport, security officials told him that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had not granted clearance for the meeting and refused him entry to Zimbabwe despite the letter Nowak presented from the Prime Minister. Nowak spent the night at the airport before he was returned to South Africa on October 29. Nowak spoke to the press upon Qto South Africa on October 29. Nowak spoke to the press upon his return and denounced his treatment as "a very alarming signal about the power structure of the present government."

¶13. (U) MDC spokesman Nelson Chamisa reiterated Nowak's sentiments and said, "What we are seeing now was exactly how the violence began in the campaign for the presidential run-off elections between March and June last year. We are beginning to see the formation of another storm of violence."

COMMENT

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¶14. (C) These arrests and detentions are reminiscent of tactics used last year when State security agents targeted middle and low ranking MDC officials and NGOs to intimidate the party and their supporters in the lead-up to the June 2008 presidential run-off. While it is too early to make a similar determination, it is apparent that ZANU-PF is turning up the heat on the MDC. These actions and an intensification of anti-MDC rhetoric in the State media signal that ZANU-PF is once again treating the MDC as an opposition party rather than a partner in government. END COMMENT.

DHANANI